

MAR 7 2006



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
THE DIRECTOR

Mr. Zenen Ozoa
Owner
Bottom Fishing Vessel *Ka Imi Kai*
4300 Waialae Avenue
Honolulu, Hawaii 96816

Dear Mr. Ozoa:

Thank you for your letter regarding the bottomfish fishery in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. As you state in your letter, this fishery is at a crossroads as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) considers the designation of a National Marine Sanctuary in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI). As the process is ongoing, I would like to point out two opportunities for you to participate.

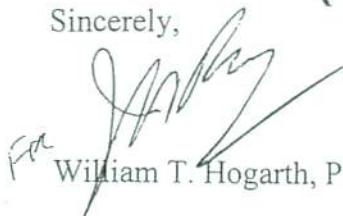
At its 131st meeting on March 14-16, 2006, the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council will take initial action to amend its fishery management plans regarding fishing activities in the proposed NWHI Sanctuary. The Council is developing recommendations to manage fisheries in the NWHI in a manner consistent with sanctuary designation. Your input regarding the current situation could assist the Council in this process.

In June 2006 NOAA plans to publish a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) along with a draft management plan for the proposed NWHI Sanctuary. The DEIS will describe and analyze the alternatives for the sanctuary, including whether to continue or phase out fishing activities. Your input regarding the current situation would be helpful in this process as well.

If you have further questions, please contact Michael Tosatto, Deputy Regional Administrator of the Pacific Islands Regional Office, at (808) 944-2281.

I appreciate your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,


William T. Hogarth, Ph.D.



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THE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR
FOR FISHERIES



CONSERVATIONISTS OUTMATCHED

Fishing interests hard to top

Tony Costa wrote an impassioned letter (March 14) representing "Hawai'i's near shore fisherman."

However, Tony Costa is the director of foreign sales for Pacific Ocean Producers. Every time a fishing boat leaves the harbor in Hawai'i, Tony makes money.

Pacific Ocean Producers is a huge company which operates over 125 long-line fishing vessels in Hawai'i and another 75 in other areas including Tahiti, Samoa, Fiji, Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Tonga, Papua New Guinea, Guam, Saipan, New Zealand, New Caledonia, Australia and California.

Pacific Ocean Producers has played a major role in developing fisheries in the South Pacific islands. Pacific Ocean Producers provides longline fishing equipment and supplies throughout the Pacific region.

It sells most of its catch to the Mainland, Asia and Europe. They also claim to "regulate themselves" through Wespac and do not seek any outside observers, guidelines or management.

As a partner in the largest U.S.

long-line fleet operating in the Pacific Ocean, Mr. Costa's opinions have nothing to do with the protection of aquatic resources or local fishermen's rights, and everything to do with promoting a political agenda of ensuring the ongoing success of his billion dollar industry.

On the other hand, Suzanne Case, director of The Nature Conservancy, tries to appeal to those few informed environmentalists (letter, March 8). She believes in using "good science" and common sense as a measure to create a seasonal moratorium in the yet to be defined marine reserves.

Unfortunately, history shows us that big commercial fishing companies have more money and more clout in Hawai'i than any other concerned groups combined. It's like the big tobacco companies claiming that cigarettes don't really pose a health risk. Good luck, Suzanne.

Peter Young of the state Department of Land and Natural Resources (letter, Feb. 20), might as well just throw in the towel on this battle to defeat special in-

terest groups like Mr. Costa's from swaying policymaking. All of the conservation management agencies involved are no match to his big-bucks pillaging of the Pacific! Peter's only a little fish swimming upstream.

Just like the Pacific Northwest timber industry through Weyerhaeuser found sanctions and support from the Bush administration to continue logging in areas that will never again sustain a rate of new growth, so it goes with the fish populations here in Hawai'i being regulated by Wespac.

Without public awareness and consistent intervention there are no checks and balances to overfishing, either.

As a licensed PADI SCUBA instructor since 1976, I warn you that Hawai'i's residents are about to miss the boat completely on saving our most important natural resource — fish.

The Hawaiian expression is "a'ole hiki i ka i'a li'ili'i ke ale i ka i'a nui" or "a small fish cannot swallow a big fish."

Gulp.

KARYN HERRMANN | Honolulu

3/20/06